

Message Text

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SUBJECT: DEMOCRATIC SPLIT FAVORS COMMUNISTS IN
BANKWORKER UNION ELECTIONS

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SUMMARY: THE INABILITY OF PS AND PSD LEADERS TO AGREE ON A
SINGLE LIST OF CANDIDATES IN THE APRIL 1 SOUTHERN BANKWORKERS
UNION ELECTIONS COULD ASSURE A COMMUNIST VICTORY. LOSS OF
THE 27,000 MEMBER PSD-CONTROLLED UNION WOULD BE A SERIOUS
SETBACK FOR THE OPEN LETTER MOVEMENT WHICH HAS LOST
SEVERAL UNIONS TO THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED CGTP IN RECENT

MONTHS. OPEN LETTER CONTROL OF THE LISBON OFFICE WORKERS UNION IS BEING CHALLENGED BY THE CGTP WHICH HAS DECLARED THE JANUARY 26 ELECTIONS FRAUDULENT IN AN EFFORT TO FORCE NEW ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. DEMOCRATS STILL DIVIDED: THERE WILL BE SEPARATE SOCIALIST AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC SLATES IN THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS IN THE IMPORTANT SOUTHERN BANKWORKERS UNION. FAILURE OF LAST DITCH EFFORTS BY PS LEADER MARCELO CURTO AND PSD LABOR SPOKESMEN RUI MACHETE AND MARIO PINTO TO FORGE A UNIFIED PS/PSD SLATE COULD ASSURE A CGTP VICTORY. OSTENSIBLY, THE DEMOCRATIC SPLIT IS DUE TO PS INSISTENCE THAT A MAJORITY OF CANDIDATES ON A JOINT LIST BE SOCIALISTS, AN UNACCEPTABLE PROPOSITION TO THE PSD WHICH WON CONTROL OF THE UNION BY NARROWLY DEFEATING SEPARATE PS AND PCP LISTS IN ELECTIONS LAST YEAR. HOWEVER, WHILE THE ALLOTMENT OF CANDIDATE SLOTS WAS A SERIOUS OBSTACLE, THE FAILURE TO REACH AGREEMENT IS MORE DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO INTERNAL DIVISIONS WITHIN BOTH PARTIES.

2. REASONS FOR DIVISIONS: THE SOCIALIST LEFTWINGERS IN THE BANKWORKERS UNION REJECTED ALLIANCE WITH THEN PSD; CONSERVATIVE SA CARNEIRO FORCES AMONG PSD BANKWORKERS WERE OPPOSED TO JOINING FORCES WITH THE PS. THE EXTENT OF THE DIVISION IN PSD RANKS WAS UNDERSCORED BY THE DECISION OF ROQUE MARTINS, A KEY PSD LEADER ON THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BANKWORKERS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, TO STAND AS A CANDIDATE ON THE SOCIALIST SLATE ALONG WITH ANOTHER PSD REPRESENTATIVE. WHILE MARTINS'S ACTION STRENGTHENS THE SOCIALIST SIDE AT PSD EXPENSE, IT WILL PROBABLY NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO TIP THE SCALES IN FAVOR OF THE PS-BACKED SLATE. COMPLICATING MATTERS FURTHER FOR THE PSD WAS A CDS DECISION TO ENTER THE CONTEST WITH ITS OWN LIST. CENTER DEMOCRATS, WHO RARELY CONTEST UNION ELECTIONS, WILL NOT ATTRACT MANY VOTES BUT THE ONES THEY GET WILL LIKELY COME FROM WOULD BE PSD VOTERS.

3. DIVISIONS OF THE LEFT: THE RECENTLY-FORMED UNION OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST LEFT (UEDS), WHICH ALLIED ITSELF WITH THE CGTP FOR THE LISBON OFFICE WORKERS ELECTION, HAS JOINED FORCES WITH THE FAR-LEFT UDP IN FORMING STILL ANOTHER SLATE. THIS LIST, HOWEVER, IS NOT EXPECTED TO DRAW MANY VOTES FROM THE CGTP SLATE. THE CGTP IS CONDUCTING AN INTENSIVE CAMPAIGN SIMILAR TO ITS EFFORTS IN THE OFFICE WORKERS ELECTION. ONE PSD SOURCE TELLS US THE COMMUNISTS SPENT MORE THAN SIX MILLION ESCUDOS (US DOLLARS 150,000) IN THAT ELECTION, A SIGNIFICANT SUM IN PORTUGUESE TERMS.

4. PSD STILL SOLID IN NORTH: THE SMALLER BANKWORKERS UNION OF THE NORTH IS HOLDING ELECTIONS THIS WEEK. IN THE NORTH THE PS, IN A DEMONSTRATION OF SOCIALIST LABOR STRATEGY INCONSISTENCY, IS COOPERATING WITH A CGTP UNITARY LIST IN AN ATTEMPT TO OUST PSD LEADERSHIP. HOWEVER, THE PSD IS CONSIDERABLY STRONGER IN THE NORTH AND IS EXPECTED TO RETAIN CONTROL. AT MARCH 14 MEETINGS OF THE THREE BANKWORKER UNIONS--NORTH, CENTER, AND SOUTH--MEMBERS OF THE NORTH AND CENTER UNIONS VOTED TO STRIKE. THE SOUTHER BANKWORKERS REJECTED THE STRIKE CALL, WHICH HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY DENOUNCED BY THE CGTP AS A POLITICAL PLOY DESIGNED TO STRENGTHENED THE PSD LEADERSHIP IN THE THREE UNIONS. THUS THE BANKWORKERS OF THE NORTH AND CENTER WILL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STRIKE FOR FOUR HOURS MARCH 20, 21, 22 AND FOR A FULL DAY MARCH 27.

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5. OFFICE WORKERS UNION IN UPHEAVAL: THE CGTP HAS CHALLENGED ELECTION RESULTS IN THE 55,000-MEMBER LISBON OFFICE WORKERS UNION. A JOINT PS/PSD OPEN LETTER SLATE WON A NARROW VICTORY IN THE JAN 26 ELECTIONS (REFTEL). EMPLOYING A MIXED BAG OF TACTICS, INCLUDING A BOYCOTT OF THE UNION'S ELECTORAL COMMISSION WHICH DELAYED THE COUNTING
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OF WRITE-IN AND CONTESTED VOTES FOR MORE THAN A MONTH, THE CGTP HAS BOTTLED-UP THE NEW LEADERSHIP'S EFFORTS TO CONDUCT UNION BUSINESS.

6. CONTROL OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS KEY: THE NEW OFFICERS FINALLY TOOK POSSESSION OF UNION OFFICES ON MARCH 15. BUT THEIR ABILITY TO RUN THE UNION IS LINKED WITH CONTROL OF THE UNION'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHICH THE COMMUNISTS DOMINATE. THE OUTGOING EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HEADED BY SOCIALIST DESSIDENT JOSE LUIS GASPAS, HAS CONTENDED THAT THE JAN 26 ELECTIONS WERE FRAUDULENT. A MARCH 12 "UNAUTHORIZED" MEETING CALLED BY THE GASPAS GROUP AND ATTENDED BY 1800 MEMBERS, WON APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE ELECTIONS NULL AND VOID IN AN EFFORT TO PREVENT THE INSTALLATION OF THE NEW OFFICERS. THE UNION LEADERSHIP HAS DECLARED THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH UNION STATUTES, ONLY THE NEWLY-ELECTED OFFICERS CAN CALL A GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING. DEFEATED CGTP CANDIDATES IN THE JANUARY ELECTIONS HAD PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED A PETITION TO THE LABOR COURT SEEKING ANNULMENT OF THE ELECTIONS.

7. COMMENT: THE OFFICE WORKERS CONTROVERSY WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THE LABOR COURT RENDERS JUDGMENT. THIS COULD TAKE SEVERAL MONTHS. THE COURT IS EXPECTED TO UPHOLD THE ELECTION RESULTS, BUT THE COMMUNISTS PROBABLY WILL STILL BE ABLE TO CONTROL THE UNION'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY. IN THE BANKWORKERS OF THE SOUTH (ALSO LISBON BASED), THE PSD LEADERSHIP WAS FORCED TO CALL PREMATURE ELECTIONS BECAUSE OF ITS INABILITY TO CONTROL THE ASSEMBLY. IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT THE NEW OFFICE WORKER LEADERS WILL PERMIT THAT TO HAPPEN, BUT THEIR CONTROL OVER THE UNION IS TENUOUS AND AN

EVENTUAL COMMUNIST TAKEOVER COULD ENSUE.

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8. THE SOUTHERN BANKWORKER SITUATION SEEMS EVEN MORE EMINOUS FOR DEMOCRATIC LABOR. PSD FORCES ARE IN A STATE OF DISARRAY. THE SOCIALISTS HAVE ONLY AN OUTSIDE POSSIBILITY OF DEFEATING THE CGTP UNITARY LIST. AS IN THE OFFICE WORKERS UNION, THE COMMUNISTS HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT INROADS AMONG NON-COMMUNIST RANK AND FILE. LAST YEAR'S ELECTION RESULTS (PSD 7,400 VOTES, PCP 7,000, PS 6,200, MRPP 400, UDP 200) SUGGEST THAT A COMBINED PS/PSD LIST IN THE APRIL 1 ELECTIONS WOULD HAVE BEEN ALMOST UNBEATABLE. UNTIL THE SOCIALISTS AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATS GET THEIR ACTS TOGETHER, THE POSSIBILITY OF MOUNTING A SERIOUS DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGE TO PCP HEGEMONY IN THE LABOR SECTOR IS SLIM. A LOSS ON APRIL 1 COULD SPELL THE END OF THE OPEN LETTER MOVEMENT WHICH WOULD BE LEFT WITH THE TROUBLE-BERIDDEN LISBON OFFICE WORKERS AND A SMATTERING OF POLITICALLY INSIGNIFICANT UNIONS ELSEWHERE.

9. REGARDING PROPOSED STRIKE ACTION, THE ANKWORKERS HAVE MADE LITTLE PROGRESS IN CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS, AND THE THREAT OF STRIKE HAS EXISTED FOR SOMETIME. NEVERTHELESS, THE PSD LEADERSHIP'S TIMING OF THE STRIKE BEFORE THE SOUTHERN BANKWORKERS ELECTIONS IS HARDLY COINCIDENTAL, AND THE REJECTION OF THE STRIKE CALL BY WORKERS IN THE SOUTH IS INDICATIVE OF COMMUNIST STRENGTH IN THE LISBON AREA WHERE THE SOUTHERN GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETS.
BLOOMFIELD

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